

USAID/THE GAMBIA

Results Review and
Resource Request (R4)

March 2000

Please Note:

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THE GAMBIA

Contribution to Food Security

Food for Peace supported projects in The Gambia continue to make significant strides in promoting food security for rural poor women farmers and their families. These projects aim at addressing the utilization, access and availability of food security through activities that strengthen the Child Survival and the Sesame Growers Association (SGA). These activities are on-track.

The SGA Project focuses on increasing the economic benefits of sesame to women farmers (income and consumption) through the increased production, processing and marketing of the whole seeds and by-products of sesame. The project complements government efforts in the promotion of food security by promoting the empowerment of women primary producer associations to become sustainable in their food production endeavors. Sesame production contributes significantly to food security at both the household and national levels. Originally introduced as a women's food crop, sesame has been grown primarily on community plots by women farmers in Kafos (traditional groups). Nowadays individuals as well are cultivating sesame for both income and consumption purposes. Women, however, continue to be the leading producers and promoters of sesame in The Gambia, which is why it is referred to as a women's crop. Women also now control the processing and marketing of sesame in The Gambia. At the National level, the production of high quality confectionery (white) seeds provide The Gambia with another cash crop that generates foreign exchange through export. This year sesame was the only cash crop that had a ready market for export. Serious problems were encountered in the marketing of peanuts this year due to a drop in the world market price. Sesame is therefore a much-needed "second cash crop" to diversify and at the same time complement peanuts in generating foreign earnings for The Gambia.

The Child Survival Project focuses on the promotion of improved infant and child feeding practices, improved maternal health and nutrition, improved home-based integrated management of acute respiratory tract infections, diarrhea and malaria and the establishment of sustainable community structures.

Effectiveness of the Program in Achieving Results¹

During FY 99, important milestones were reached which paved the way for sustainability of both the Child Survival Project and the SGA/Agriculture project.

During FY99, sesame yields per hectare increased from 123 kg/ha in 1998 to 138 kg/ha in 1999. This is an increase of about 12.2%. The Project's goal is to increase production by 25% against the baseline. The overall production has also increased significantly during the past year. The total sesame produced by SGA members in FY98 was 266 metric tons. In FY99 this was increased to 468 metric tons, an increase of 76%. The target for this indicator has already been surpassed. The total value of production from the sale of sesame has also increased from D651,000 in FY98 to D1,656,000 in FY99, an increase of 154%. This is a proxy indicator for the overall increase of individual income of SGA members. The target for this indicator is "50%

¹ For detailed information on this section, please refer to the FY 1999 Results Report submitted by CRS/The Gambia.

increase in the total value of production from the sale of sesame". This target has already been surpassed. The project has also successfully increased the amount of sesame processed and has also been able to increase the value of sesame through processing. Additionally, the oil expellers and the ram presses are all operating in a financially sustainable way. With the establishment of SGA's apex organization, the National Association of Women Farmers (NAWFA), following the democratic election of a Board of Directors (The National Executive Committee) by its members and the hiring of a competent secretariat, the SGAs have now become institutionalized as vibrant, strong and sustainable associations. Being the only women farmer's platform in The Gambia, these support structures have strategically positioned rural women farmers to be able to advocate for their needs themselves from government, donors, and other sectors of society. The SGAs have been able to access funding to support the marketing of sesame for their members. Today the SGAs and NAWFA are effectively involved in the marketing of sesame from its members, an enterprise they are gradually controlling.

The Child Survival Project has made significant gains in improving maternal and child health in target communities. The Child Survival Project has significantly contributed towards reducing the prevalence of low birth weight babies and also helped increase the number of pregnant women receiving iron during pregnancy. The project has also successfully increased the percentage of children improving from malnutrition from 34% to 50%. The project proposes to increase this to 70% by March 2001. GAFNA has also received funding from the World Bank. This funding will help GAFNA to continue to promote the local maternal supplement, which will effectively replace Title II commodities used in Child Survival activities.

In August 1999, a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted to review the progress of implementation, focusing on the processes. Findings of the evaluation indicated that both projects are effective and benefit the women and their families. Information collected from the field showed that both have the potential improve food security by increasing women's income and the health and nutritional status of mothers and children. Both projects are moving towards sustainability.

In FY2000, CRS will commission two independent studies. One will be a Regional Sesame Marketing Study that will describe the current market system of sesame, the competitiveness of sesame as a cash crop and the profit margins for sesame seed and/or oil within the present system from farm-gate to the market of eventual utilization. A second study will look at the impact of sesame on the Gambian population through an impact assessment using a case study approach. The scopes of work for both studies are attached to CRS's Results Report.